

REMARKS

This Amendment is responsive to the Office Action mailed January 14, 2008. After entry of this Amendment, claims 11-20 are currently pending in this application and subject to examination. Claim 11 is amended to recite additional features. Claim 19 is amended to delete a feature which has been incorporated into amended claim 11. Support for these amendments is found at page 4, lines 5-7 and 17-19. No new matter is added.

Reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested in view of the following remarks.

Substance of Interview with Examiner

Applicants participated in an in-person interview with Examiners Gregory Listvoyb and Rabon Sergeant on May 7, 2008. Applicants thank the Examiners for their professionalism and courtesy during this interview. Applicants and Examiners discussed introduction of aqueous medium into a reactor via two or more inlets located on the reactor. Applicants disagreed that persons of ordinary skill in the art would be motivated to modify the inventions of the Mohrschladt and Bassler references according to the teachings of Marchildon, since Marchildon teaches multiport introduction of steam into a reactor at the end opposite to where the reactants are introduced so that the steam travels *countercurrently* to the direction of the reactant flow.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 11-20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over either of U.S. Patent No. 6,359,020 to Mohrschladt (hereinafter, "Mohrschladt") or U.S. Patent No. 6,815,527 to Bassler et al. (hereinafter, "Bassler") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,201,096 to Marchildon et al. (hereinafter, "Marchildon"). Applicants respectfully traverse in view of the amended claims.

Claim 11, as amended, recites:

“[A] continuous process for producing polyamides, their oligomers or mixtures thereof, and optionally with further reaction

products, which comprises reacting aminonitriles or dinitriles and diamines or mixtures thereof, and optionally together with further polyamide-forming monomers and/or oligomers, with an aqueous medium composed of aqueous monomer and oligomer extracts obtained from polyamide production by extraction of the polymer with water, in a reactor which has a vertical longitudinal axis and through which there is a flow substantially in the longitudinal direction, wherein *said aqueous medium (1) has a solids content in the range of from 2 % to 30 % by weight and (2) is introduced into the reactor at two or more different locations along the vertical longitudinal axis, wherein the fraction of the total amount of said aqueous medium fed at the reactor inlet is in the range of from 35 % to 95 % by weight.*

To establish *prima facie* obviousness of a claimed invention, all of the claim limitations must be taught or suggested by the prior art. See MPEP § 2143.03 (citing *In re Royka*, 490 F.2d 981, 180 USPQ 580 (CCPA 1974)). Claim 1, as amended, requires that (1) the aqueous medium have a solids content in the range of from 2 % to 30 % by weight and that (2) the fraction of the total amount of said aqueous medium fed at the reactor inlet is in the range of from 35 % to 95 % by weight. None of the references cited by the Examiner, either alone or in combination, teach or suggest either of these claim limitations. As such, the Examiner has failed to establish that claim 1 is *prima facie* obvious. Furthermore, since claims 12-20 all depend directly or indirectly from claim 1, the Examiner has also failed to establish these dependent claims as *prima facie* obvious over the cited references.

Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection.

In view of the foregoing amendment and remarks, Applicants believe the pending application is in condition for allowance.

The Director is authorized to charge \$460.00 to Deposit Account No. 03-2775, under Order No. 13156-00069-US, to cover the extension fee required by 37 C.F.R. § 1.17(a)(2). Should any other fees be required in connection with this Amendment, authorization is hereby made to charge any fees due or outstanding, including any extension fees, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 03-2775.

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Respectfully submitted,

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